SCRIPT BITS!
Issue: Sonic the Hedgehog #164 (JULY'06)
Pages: 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 16

Welcome one and all to **Script Bits!** This monthly feature will take roughly forty-five percent of a story in Archie Comic's *Sonic the Hedgehog* and present it to you as insight into the writing process.

Part of the fun of this feature will be comparing what was written and what saw print. Sometimes the vision is tweaked as the artists interpret the script. Sometimes the original idea doesn't work once put on paper and must be adjusted from there. Sometimes the artist has a stroke of genius and does something different than what the script calls for - and it's for the better!

So pull out your copy of *Sonic the Hedgehog* #164 from July of 2006 and get ready to read along!

Remembering "The Darkest Storm" – part three

"Downburst" posed a very large problem that I knew of before I even waded into the blockbuster story arch – how in the heck will the heroes win this? Mammoth Mogul alone would be a problem. At the top of his game he had four full factions of mobians losing to him. Now he had the combined totems of the Source of All, increasing his power exponentially. Tack on "I'll-pull-the-air-from-your-lungs" Ixis Naugus and the combined strength of the Destructix and Uma Arachnis's orphaned children and ….well …I was painted into a bit of a corner.

It would've been very easy for the Ancient Walkers to step in and take care of things but – oh, wait – they'd been killed off in the first act. With sixteen pages we don't have time for anyone to run off and grab some Chaos Emeralds for Sonic to go super with.

There was also Anonymous presiding over all this, goading each group into action. In the last issue we saw Dr. Eggman was plotting *something.* So with all the mayhem in Knothole, we still have that dark cloud on the horizon. No amount of fistcuffs on the part of our heroes would get them through this.

This was why Sir Connery was brought in from the beginning. The paladin knight had the Sword of Light – the last vestige of the Ancient Walkers you could say – and had been shown as a formidable force against dark magic users. A part of me felt bad for bringing Sir Connery back just to kill him off; it didn't seem sporting. So I made sure to give him a big send off – a huge, titanic clash with Mogul.

The loss of Sir Connery helped clean out the list of characters that we sort of had "on file." It also removed the Source of All from continuity, leaving us with just the Chaos Emeralds and rings as magical items. Everything nice and tidy.

The fight for the Crown and Sword of Acorns also gave me a moment to show that – just because he's king now – Elias hasn't totally forgotten his adventuring ways.

Dr. Eggman's assault at the very end served a number of purposes. The first and most obvious was the resolve the huge battle in Knothole. We've spent three issues watching Sonic & Co. struggle, only for Dr. Eggman to wipe them out in seconds? What a villain! What a force!

Secondly it set up a number of plot points for those villains. The Spider Ninja Kids, as cool as they were for the moment, were one-trick ponies. Spider-ponies. Ninja spider-poinies. So the nameless half-dozen throw-away villains were thrown away – captured in "Downburst" and formally eliminated in "Leak" the next month.

The Destruxtix, at risk of being killed as well, were ready to side with any other villain out there. Enter Dr. Finitevus and – again – the events of "Leak." And what of Mammoth Mogul and Ixis Naugus? A.D.A.M. pointed out that Mogul was using his powers to protect himself and his cronies, but that power couldn't last forever – hence the death of the spiders and the betrayal by the Destructix. Surely Mogul would reserve the protective power for himself, leaving Naugus to be affected by the Egg Grapes. I wonder if that will be touched upon at all?

(Heh heh)

And finally we have A.D.A.M. We find out that ***A***dam ***D***etermines ***A***nonymous's ***M***ovements. Unfortunately, many took this as the revival of the classic Ivo Robotnik, which was never my intention. Since Anonymous's introduction, it appeared to me that it was being heavily hinted it was supposed to be Classic Robotnik. This, in my mind, was a bad direction to take the book in but I wasn't going to leave the continuity behind. Thus, I went with the ambiguous until the very end. The computer monitors, the appearance of a flesh-and-blood Destructix, and the questionable nature of M's betrayal (as well as the last line of the issue) were all meant to point the finger at A.D.A.M.

So with plot points resolved and new ones seeded, we are set for a great deal down the road. Keep your eyes peeled!

This installment see the final, heroic moments of Sir Connery, Sonic squaring off with Dr. Eggman and the final reveal of Anonymous's identity.

PAGE 4

PANEL 1 - Full-body shot of the ragged and weary SIR CONNERY. The SWORD OF LIGHT glows softly with white light. He stares down MOGUL (unseen). A real bad-ass moment. Anyone you can fit into the background will be fine.

CONNERY
. . . I say to thee - nay!

PANEL 2 - CONNERY in profile, the SWORD OF LIGHT held up before him. It grows more radiant - but the light here is always even and soft (to off-set MOGUL's dark and fiery).

CONNERY
The Ancient Walkers charged me to purge this world of dark magic.

I thought I was finished when I had slain Damocles the Elder* and so many before him.

I see now that I have but one more task at hand.

EDITOR'S NOTE
*Knuckles sort-of encountered him in S#46

PANEL 3 - SONIC rubs his hands together, smiling confidently. MOGUL is to his side, still burning and looking unimpressed.

SONIC
Alright Sir Connery!
Let's do it to it!

PANEL 4 - MOGUL bends his arm at the elbow and clenches his fist- a very muted action. A giant stone fist erupts from the ground and seizes SONIC. Each joint in its fingers and at the wrist burn with green fire. SONIC shouts angrily.

MOGUL
Stay out of this for once in your miserably life, you insufferable wretch.

SONIC
HEY!
No fair!

PANEL 5 - CONNERY holds his sword at the ready. MOGUL advances upon him from the foreground, the dark green, fiery aura building around him. CONNERY is unafraid.

MOGUL
Your patron spirits are no more, Connery.
You are at my mercy.

CONNERY
Nay, Mogul.
They are with me now in my final act.

PAGE 5

PANEL 1 - MOGUL and CONNERY lock swords. LIGHT's glow intensifies and remains even and beautiful. SWORD's green fire blows back and flares. MOGUL glowers down at CONNERY, who returns the look but is obviously struggling.

CONNERY
urnf!
They gave me this
The Sword of Light
Blessed with the power to destroy the darkness . . .

PANEL 2 - Tight aerial view. MOGUL (top/right of panel) swipes across the scene, trailing green flames. CONNERY (bottom/left of panel) blocks against it, a mixture of white sparks and green flares flying from the impact.

SFX (impact)
SSSRKT!

PANEL 3 - MOGUL takes the foreground, his back to us. He has thrust forward and CONNERY has deflected it, pushing it to the side and towards the ground. CONNERY should look determined by haggard.

SFX (along SWORD OF ACORNS length)
SSSRKT!

PANEL 4 – Long shot of CONNERY, kneeling, blocking an overhead chop by MOGUL. Huge shower of white sparks and green fiery flares from the impact. MOGUL looks to be putting a lot of power into the attack, and CONNERY looks nearly defeated.

SFX (arcing around impact)
SSSSRKT!

PANEL 5 - Close on CONNERY's weary face. He smiles and winces beneath the brilliance of both his own sword and MOGUL's.

CONNERY (wavering bubble)
I am sorry, my king
I must destroy the Source of All

<u>PAGE 6</u>

PANEL 1 - CONNERY shouts, wan face contorting as he fights to stand. LIGHT glows its brightest yet. MOGUL bears down against him, glaring.

CONNERY
I am Sir Connery!
Paladin of the Ancient Walkers!
Bringer of the Light and Enemy to the Darkness!

MOGUL
And they chastise me for my verbosity . . .

PANEL 2- CONNERY on his feet, shouting down MOGUL in righteous fury. The scene is awash with white light. MOGUL goes wide-eyed. The dark green fire about him blowing back sharply and thinning out.

CONNERY
By the power invested in me by the highest of powers . . .

MOGUL
No!
NO!

INSET - Small, circular inset showing SONIC still in the rock-hand's grip. He smiles grimly.

SONIC
C'mon, Sir Connery.
Show him how it's done old-school.

PANEL 3 - Stark white panel that finishes out the rest of the page. We see both CONNERY and MOGUL in black sillhoutte. CONNERY can be seen finishing a swipe of his sword - like he just hit one out of the ballpark. His form pulls and wisps away. MOGUL recoils, the SWORD and CROWN shattering around him. Flickers and flares of green flame trail away behind him.

CONNERY
I SMITE THEE!

MOGUL (burst balloon, large text)
NO!!!

<u>PAGE 7</u>

PANEL 1 - Long, wide panel. In the foreground we see CONNERY's clothing - burnt and tattered, fluttering to the ground. LIGHT also drops. Wisps of white smoke escape the openings in his clothing. Further back, we see MOGUL stagger and nearly collapse. In the furthest background, the stone hand shatters, the green flames wisping away. SONIC is already leaping from it, his eyes on the remains of CONNERY. Just within view beside him, we see the haggard ELIAS staggering forward, looking crushed (emotionally).

SONIC
SIR CONNERY!

ELIAS
No - !

PANEL 2 - The heroes gather around the remains. KNUCKLES looks down at the ground, saddened. TAILS holds CONNERY's cap up to MERLIN, both saddened as well. SONIC bows his head, frowning. ELIAS hoists LIGHT and stares at it, devastated. Whoever else you can show behind them is fine.

MERLIN
He used his very life to destroy the corrupted Source.

He gave everything.

PANEL 3 - MOGUL struggles to his feet. NAUGUS and SIMIAN help him up. Fit whichever DESTRUCTIX you can around and behind them.

NAUGUS
Master . . .?

MOGUL
Rrrgh!
This means nothing . . . nothing!

PANEL 4 - Long panel to cap off the end of the page. SONIC, TAILS and KNUCKLES spear-head the gathering of heroes that line the background. MOGUL and NAUGUS can be seen sneering their way in from the foreground.

SONIC
Nothing?!
We lost a life just to take away your toys!
That's giving too much!

MOGUL
This day may be weary with the toil of battle, but it is not over!
I still command increadible power!

PAGE 10

PANEL 1 - The EGG HAWK swoops down from the sky to ground-level. SONIC, TAILS and whoever else you can fit into the scene glare at the villain, exhausted.

SONIC
Wake up, folks!
We're not finished.

EGGMAN
Relax, hedgehog. I'm not after you today.

PANEL 2 - We sit on EGGMAN's shoulder as he gloats. SONIC glares and points an accusing finger.

SONIC
Right.
Pull the other one, doc.

EGGMAN
I'm being sincere, rodent.

Mammoth Mogul and Ixis Naugus were far more of a threat to me than you.

PANEL 3 - EGGMAN looks away, mustache drooping. He looks sad, angry, and angry at being sad. We see a faint image of MECHA's face floating over his shoulder - his remembrance of her.

EGGMAN
I've lost a lot today because of them.

PANEL 4- SONIC and EGGMAN in profile. EGGMAN points to the sky.

SONIC
So you just blasted them?
You usually aren't that clean-cut.

EGGMAN
On the contrary, Sonic, they've been teleported away using the technology I wasted on Hunter*
They are my captives now.

SONIC
What about us then?

EDITOR'S NOTE
*S#141

PANEL 5 - Close on EGGMAN as he smiles broadly and makes a sweeping gesture to the flying fleet that fills the sky above him.

EGGMAN
What about you, Sonic?
Look at my Egg Fleet! I could wipe you off the map!
But not yet.

<u>PAGE 11</u>

PANEL 1 - EGGMAN leans out of his cockpit, the EGG HAWK tipping dangerously close to the ground. SONIC smirks angrily up at him. They're almost face to face.

SONIC
No need to be shy.
Let's go, Eggman!

EGGMAN
I will crush your pithy resistance when I want to, rodent!

You will meet you end on my terms and mine alone!

PANEL 2 - SONIC lunges at EGGMAN. The EGG HAWK lifts into the air, disappearing off the panel.

SONIC
We'll see about -
- HEY!

EGGMAN
WAH-HA-HA-HA!

PANEL 3 - Close on EGGMAN in the sky, the fleet behind him. He grins wickedly and wags a finger.

EGGMAN
Too slow, Sonic!
You're all to tired to be worth my effort.

PANEL 4 - Long, wide panel. We get the entirety of our heroes, their backs to us. SONIC takes center. FIONA holds his hand on the left. SONIC rests his hand on TAILS's head on the right. TAILS clings to MERLIN's arm. SALLY stands beside FIONA and looks over at her holding hands with SONIC. ELIAS stands next to SALLY, leaning against the Sword of Light for support. Stagger the rest behind them and not entirely on panel. The EGG HAWK veers and zips away to join the retreating fleet. The sun begins the set, casting amber tones to the scene.

EGGMAN
Until next time, Sonic!

SONIC
Whenever you're ready, Robotnik.

<u>PAGE 16</u>

SPLASH PANEL - Close on the screen. We see the classic Robotnik vague silhouette from Page 1 again, this time reflected in ADAM's screen. I know it's just a computer screen, but do your best to make it creepy. Do whatever you feel works best.

ADAM (square, free-floating bubbles)
I have made you the unrivaled power on Mobius.
I have destroyed the Ancient Walkers and the Source of All.
Soon you and Sonic will be destroyed as well.
You will make the connection too late that
Adam

Determines
Anonymous's
Movements

NOTE: On the last four words, really emphasizes the first letter. Also, for each one, give them their own bubbles, staggered like a staircase but close together. Really hammer-home the point.

TEXT BOX
The End

Remembering "Sonic Riders" – part two
Pages: 1, 2, 3

There really isn't too much to say this time around. Once again we see Tracy's phenomenal aping of the Sonic Riders art style – doing a superior job in some cases, I'd say. The only really innovative moment, for me, was explaining why Tails would have airboards lying around. The story served its purposed – the Babylon Rogues are now part of continuity, we did the adaptation Sega wanted, and it fit into the current ArchieSonic would without making too many waves. (Or jets or storms – har har!) I hope we'll be able to bring back the Babylon Rogues one day.

The selection for this installment is the opening three pages. I especially enjoyed writing the interactions between the Triple Threat here.

PAGE ONE

PANEL 1 - The common room of FREEDOM HQ (see S#160). SONIC enters in via the door looking dirty and roughed-up. KNUCKLES, who was dozing on the couch, sits up and takes notice. TAILS, who was reading in a chair, drops his book and hops to his feet. TITLE in top left corner, credits where ever you can fit them.

KNUCKLES
Whoa.

TAILS
SONIC!
Are you okay?

SONIC
The worst bruise is on my pride, bud.

TITLE: SONIC RIDERS
PART TWO

CREDITS

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Inks:
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Special thanks to: _____ at Sega Licensing

PANEL 2 - TAILS eases SONIC onto the couch. KNUCKLES stands and bangs his fists together, angry. SONIC holds his head, grimacing.

KNUCKLES
Who did this to you?
I'll make them pay!

SONIC
Tone it down on the volume and the macho, Knux.
(small - an aside) ow

TAILS
Was it Dr. Eggman?

PANEL 3 - SONIC in profile. SONIC's spines fade into the memory of the BABYLON ROGUES: JET, STORM and WAVE (see last issue). We see the BABYLON ROGUES from the shoulders-up. JET wears a nasty, smug smirk. STORM is grim, almost unreadable. WAVE has a quiet, cruel smile.

SONIC
Sorta.
He's got a new group of jerks called the **Babylon Rogues**.

PAGE TWO

PANEL 1 - Focus on the trio on the couch. TAILS looks thoughtful and is off in his own little world. SONIC glares straight ahead, mortified. Go ahead and make SONIC's expression comically defeated. KNUCKLES crosses his arms and leans in towards SONIC, amused.

SONIC
They flew in on airboards that were . . .

KNUCKLES
Yeah?

SONIC
Well . . . they were . . .

KNUKLCES
Yeah?

SONIC (small text, drippy/icicle balloon)
...really fast.

PANEL 2 - Background: TAILS hops up and runs into the Brain Trust nook (see Freedom HQ reference sheet). Foreground: KNUCKLES claps SONIC confidently on the shoulder. SONIC gives him a wincing glare.

KNUCKLES
Don't worry, Sonic.
We'll help you even the odds.

SONIC
First - Ow.
Second - How? I could barely keep up with all three.
How do you expect to keep up?

PANEL 3 - TAILS appears in the doorway, holding up a BOARD of his own. TAILS looks very please with himself.

TAILS
With one of these!

PANEL 4 - SONIC and KNUCKLES enter the Brain Trust nook. Two more BOARDS can be seen propped against the counters and consoles. KNUCKLES holds the BOARD TAILS just had, inspecting it. TAILS - excited - leads SONIC towards the other BOARDS.

SONIC
And you were making airboards . . . why?

TAILS
So the rest of us could keep up with you on missions!
And I made one for you in case you wanted to ride one too!

<u>PAGE THREE</u>

PANEL 1 - SONIC inspects one of the BOARDS, a smile creeping onto his face. TAILS looks on, proud.

SONIC

Nice work, Tails.

TAILS
Thanks!
They're still prototypes, but they're all functional.

SONIC
They better be . . .

PANEL 2 - The Great Forest. The BABYLON ROGUES fly through the trees in formation: JET on point, STORM behind/background, WAVE behind/foreground.

TEXT BOX (blue - Sonic)
. . . because the Babylon Rogues said they'd be coming for Knothole tomorrow!

PANEL 3 - Front-view of the BABYLON ROGUES: STORM, JET, and WAVE in that order. JET smirks nastily. WAVE is quietly, evilly bemused. STORM seems moderately concerned.

STORM
Do you think he'll show, Jet?
We are attacking his home after all.

JET
No way, Storm.
I put a serious hurt on him last time.
. . . with you and Wave, of course.

WAVE
Of course.

PANEL 4 - The BABYLON ROGUES recoil and flail, nearly falling from their BOARDS. Three transparent streaks shoot in front of them: red, blue, and orange. Do NOT combine them into a "rainbow" - keep them separate.

JET
WHOA!